DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 015 FL 017 813

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TITLE Case Stacking and Case Spreading in Korean.
PUB DATE Dec 88
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Combined Annual Meetings of the Linguistic Society of America, American Association for Applied Linguistics, and the American Dialect Society (New Orleans, LA, December 27-30, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Case (Grammar); Dialect Studies; *Grammar; *Korean; Language Research; Language Variation; *Morphology (Languages); *Nouns; Structural Analysis (Linguistics); Uncommonly Taught Languages

ABSTRACT

An analysis of Korean case marking proposes an explanation for several aspects of marking, especially stacking and spreading, from a lexical perspective. The explanation has advantages over previous theories in that (1) it explains the morphology of Korean case marking without reference to several levels of syntactic derivation, including intermediate levels for which there is little morphological evidence; (2) it explains case spreading in terms of a cross-linguistically recurrent trend in which grammatical relations may be shared rather than passed on, avoiding the apparent contradiction a feature-passing analysis introduces in some sentences; and (3) it allows differences between two dialects to be described in terms of a slight difference in strategies for morphological representation of case. (MSE)

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CASE STACKING AND CASE SPREADING IN KOREAN

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1. Introduction

Gerdts and Youn (1988) describe two case-marking phenomena in Korean which they call *case stacking* and *case spreading*. An example that contains both stacking and spreading[1] is shown in (1).

(1) [=GY40]
Suni-eykey-ka Chelsu-eyîyhae chaek-i
Suni-DAT -NOM Chelsu-by book -NOM

cu -eci-et -ta.
give-pas-pst-ind

'Sooni was given the book by Chelsu.'

In (1), *Suni* carries both DAT and NOM case markers (hence "stacking"), and the NOM marker occurs on two distinct NPs (hence "spreading").

Gerdts and Youn's RG approach explains these phenomena in terms of distinct strata of grammatical relations and some Korean-specific rules for stacking and spreading. In this paper, I propose a lexical analysis of case marking in Korean which makes use of some of Gerdts and Youn's intuitions regarding I-case (initial, or semantic, case) vs. S-case (surface, or grammatical, case). In the analysis presented in this paper, the grammatically relevant case markers are NOM and ACC (which mark the grammatically "prominent" arguments), all other case markers indicating thematic roles. Case stacking is seen as resulting either from complex thematic role assignment or from grammatical linking of thematically marked arguments. Case spreading is a result of what I call the *Open Season* phenomenon, also observed in other languages unrelated to Korean.

2. I-Case vs. S-Case.

In Gerdts and Youn's analysis, two types of case marking are distinguished in Korean, S-Case and I-Case:

> S-Case is grammatical case licensed in terms of final structure while I-Case is selected on the basis of the semantic role of the nominal and is licensed in initial structure (G&Y, §3.1)

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[1] All examples are taken from Gerdts and Youn (1988). Their example numbers are given in brackets, and their transcription is retained, with the exception of the high central vowel, which they transcibe as a barred 'i' and I transcribe as 'î.'

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Paper presented at the combined Annual Meetings of the Linguistic Society of America, American Association for Applied Linguistics, and the American Dialect Society (New Orleans, LA, December 27-30, 1988).

Given this distinction, case marking is as shown in (2):

(2) *Korean Case (partial)* [=G&Y(17)]
- a. S-Case
  NOM is licensed by a final 1
  ACC is licensed by a final 2
- b. I-Case
  DAT is licensed by a Goal, Exp, Loc, Ben, Temp, etc.
  INSTR is licensed by a Instr, Path, etc.
  COM is licensed by a Comitative.

In a footnote, Gerdts and Youn note several morphological differences between I-Case and S-Case. For one thing, S-Case can be omitted (with certain constraints), while I-Case cannot:

(3) [=G&Y fn. 9, (i), (ii)]

a. Chelsu-ka Suni-lîl/Ø po -at -ta.
Chelsu-NOM Suni-ACC/Ø see-pst-ind
'Chelsu saw Suni.'

b. Kî sopho -ka hangkongphyen-îlo/*Ø
the parcel-NOM air.mail -INST/*Ø

ponae-ci -et -ta.
send -pas-pst-ind

'The parcel was sent by airmail.'

In addition, certain delimiters appear before S-Case, but after I-Case:

(4) [=G&Y fn. 9, (iii), (iv)]

a. Insu-kkaci-ka keki -ey ka-t -ta.
Insu-even -NOM there-DAT go-pst-ind
b. *Insu-ka-kkaci keki-ey ka-t-ta.
'Even Insu went there.'

c. *Chelsu-ka cenche -kkaci-eykey
Chelsu-NOM ex.wife-even -DAT

senmul -îl cu -et -ta
present-ACC give-pst-ind

d. Chelsu-ka cenche-eykey-kkaci senmul-îl
cu-et-ta.

'Chelsu gave even his ex-wife a present.'

In the next section, I review Gerdts and Youn's stacking and spreading data, and introduce a dialectal distinction exhibited by my informants.

3. Case stacking.

Cases do not stack freely in Korean. Gerdts and Youn note the constraints shown in (5a) and (b), and I add the (presumably non-trivial) constraint in (5c).

(5) *Constraints on case stacking.*
a. *S-Case - I-Case
b. *S-Case$_j$ - S-Case$_j$
c. *Case$_i$-Case$_i$

(5a) states that an S-Case marker cannot appear "inside" an I-Case marker. (5b) states that a nominal can have at most one S-Case marker [=G&Y (33)]. (5c) states that a nominal cannot carry two identical case markers.

Ignoring instances of stacking involving Comitative "case", which may, at least in its stacking use, be a conjunction clitic rather than a case marker, Gerdts and Youn present three types of stacking, examples of which appear in (6).

(6) *Examples of three types of case stacking.*

a. DAT-NOM [=G&Y (40)]

Suni-eykey-ka Chelsu-eyîyhae chaek-i
Suni-DAT -NOM Chelsu-by book -NOM

cu -eci-et -ta.
give-pas-pst-ind

'Suni was given the book by Chelsu.'

b. DAT-ACC [=G&Y (38)]

Chelsu-ka Suni-eykey-lîl chaek-îl
Chelsu-NOM Suni-DAT -ACC book -ACC

cu -et -ta.
give-pst-ind

'Chelsu gave Suni the book.'

c. DAT-INSTR [=G&Y (36)]

Chelsu-ka Yengsu-eykey-lo
Chelsu-NOM Yengsu-DAT -INSTR

kong-îl tenci-et -ta.
ball-ACC throw-pst-ind

'Chelsu threw the ball to(ward) Yengsu.'

As it happens, none of my informants accept sentences of types (6a) and (b), although they do accept complex directional stackings like that shown in (6c). When asked to "correct" (6a) and (b), my informants delete the NOM marker from *Suni-eykey* in (6a) and delete the ACC marker from *Suni-eykey* in (6b). In addition, while Gerdts and Youn's informants accept all three variants shown in (7) for a certain class of Inversion predicates, my informants accept only (a) and (b).

(7) *Case marking in Inversion clauses.* [=G&Y 14]

a. Haksaeng-tîl-eykey ton -i
student -pl -DAT money-NOM

philyoha-ta.
need -ind

b. Haksaeng-tîl-i ton-i philyoha-ta.
-NOM -NOM

c. Haksaeng-tîl-eykey-ka ton-i philyoha-ta.
-DAT -NOM -NOM

'The students need money.'

Hereafter, I will refer to Gerdts and Youn's informants' dialect as Dialect A, and to my informants' dialect as Dialect B.

Case spreading is seen in sentences (6a) and (7b,c), each with two nominals marked NOM, and (6b) and (8), with two nominals marked ACC. Of these, only (7b) is acceptable in Dialect B.

(8) *Korean Dative Shift* [=G&Y (57a)]

Chelsu-ka Suni-lîl chaek-îl
Chelsu-NOM Suni-ACC book-ACC

cu -et -ta.
give-pst-ind

'Chelsu gave Suni a book.'

A summary of the differences between Dialect A and Dialect B with respect to stacking and spreading is shown in (9). Clearly, stacking is much more constrained in B than in A, being restricted to I-Case; the paucity of stacking in B and its lack of a Dative Shift also limits its spreading to 'NOM...NOM' cases in Inversion clauses.

(9) *Stacking and Spreading in A and B*

Stacking	E.g.	Dialect A	Dialect B
DAT-NOM	6a	yes	no
DAT-ACC	6b	yes	no
DAT-INST	6c	yes	yes
Spreading			
NOM...NOM	7b	yes	yes
ACC...ACC	8	yes	no

4. The RG analysis.

The primary focus of Gerdts and Youn (1988) is their ascension analysis of Inversion clauses such as in (7). Inversion clauses are most commonly treated in RG as 1-to-3 retreat, as represented in the stratal chart in (10a). However, Gerdts and Youn argue for an advancement analysis of these clauses in Korean, shown in (10b).

(10) *Stratal charts for Inversion clauses.*

a. Traditional analysis.

1	2	Initial stratum
3	2	Inversion
3	1	Unaccusative Adv.
(Exp)	(Theme)	

b. G&Y's analysis of Korean Inversion clauses.

3	2
2	Cho
1	Cho
(Exp)	(Theme)

Gerdts and Youn's arguments that the Exp is a Final 1 involve reference to Subject Honorification and Plural Copy, which are restricted to Final 1s. With respect to the stacking displayed in (7c), a 3-to-1 advancement analysis would incur no violation of the Mirror (or Satellite) Principle, which states (roughly) that the ordering of morphemes should parallel the application of morphological rules. Any 1-to-3 retreat analysis would appear to violate this principle.

While I concur with Gerdts and Youn's assessment of the Exp argument as surface subject, I find their analysis of the Theme argument more problematical. Assuming the stratal chart in (10b) for Inversion clauses, and the one in (11) for dative shift clauses, then the Theme is in both cases an Initial 2 and a Final 2-Chomeur.

(11) *Stratal Chart for Dative Shift clauses (cf. (8))* [=G&Y (57b)]

1	2	3
1	Cho	2
(Agent)	(Theme)	(Goal/Rec)

The obvious question that arises is: why does the Theme receive NOM case (normally reserved for Final 1s) in (7) but ACC case (normally reserved for Final 2s) in (8)? Gerdts and Youn's solution to this problem of the case of the Theme involves the use of Aissen's (1987) Lateral Feature Passing Law, which "allows a nominal to pass features to a nominal which it has placed en chomage". (Gerdts and Youn, §4.3)

Thus, per their analysis, the Theme in (7) inherits NOM case from the Exp, which puts the Theme en chomage at the second stratum and which is a Final 1. In (8), the Theme inherits ACC case from the Exp, which in this instance is a Final 2.

Clearly, it must be case and not grammatical relation that is passed on to the retired nominal; otherwise, e.g. in (7) and (10), the final stratum would have two 1s, a violation of the Stratal Uniqueness Law, and perhaps also of the Chomeur Advancement Ban. But this presents a contradiction: How can NOM case be passed on to the Theme by the Exp in (7a) if the Exp has DAT case? Presumably, the Lateral Feature Passing Law does not permit the assigning nominal to pass on a feature it *could* have but does not.

A second, perhaps weaker objection to this analysis is that it seems to weaken the case assignment rules in (2) in that NOM and ACC are no longer strictly markers of final or surface grammatical relations. Of course, to insist that all NOM marked nominals are Final 1s or all ACC marked nominals are Final 2s would be untenable in an RG analysis, as this would imply, e.g., that (7b) has two Final 1s, producing violations of the Stratal Uniqueness Law and the Chomeur Law.

In the next section, I introduce a lexical analysis of case and agreement marking which captures some of the insights of Relational Grammar but eliminates the need for reference to several levels of syntactic derivation.

5. A Lexical Approach

A great deal has been written and said about thematic roles and grammatical relations, with *not* a great deal of consensus resulting as to their status in grammar. The issues involved are extensive and complex and necessarily beyond the scope of this paper. I will therefore assume without discussion that thematic roles[3] and grammatical relations, as they are

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generally understood, exist and are distinct, and will refer to them hereafter without further comment.

My approach assumes that each argument in a clause is assigned a thematic role by the predicate, and that this occurs before the argument has been assigned a grammatical relation (or discourse function) by language-specific convention.

Central to this approach is the existence of a *thematic hierarchy*, i.e., the existence of a hierarchy of thematic or semantic roles. This hierarchy has in the past been invoked to explain certain facts of binding and control, and more immediately relevant to the issues at hand, to determine the assignment of grammatical relations.

Although opinions differ as to the exact nature and ordering of the thematic roles in this hierarchy, and it is possible that the ordering may differ slightly from language to language, there is some general agreement as to which types of roles are higher in the hierarchy, and which types lower. For example, generally speaking, those roles which ascribe agency and/or sentience to their arguments will be higher in the hierarchy than, say, those ascribing change of state or location. The hierarchy shown in (12) is typical of those proposed for most languages. Ordering within each thematic group is ignored as irrelevant for the purposes of this paper.

(12) *Thematic Hierarchy*
Agent/Cause > Experiencer (several types) > Theme/Patient > Goal/Beneficiary/Receiver > Path/Location

In this approach, the lexical entry for a predicate indicates, among other things, the semantic roles assigned by the predicate to its argument(s). A set of Thematic Translation Rules associates these very specific semantic roles with a much smaller set of thematic roles. As suggested above, languages may differ as to which *less common* thematic roles they use, but a relatively small number of thematic roles (such as the ones seen in (12)) are extremely common cross-linguistically, and are presumably universal. In any case, the number of thematic roles used by any given language is small.

In Breen (in preparation) I present evidence for the need for two distinct levels of lexical derivation, one (th-structure) listing the set of thematic roles assigned by a predicate, and the other (a-structure) listing the indexed set of lexical arguments at which level predicate morphology is applied. (13) shows the pre-linking lexical structure of English 'give', assuming this distinction between th-structure and a-structure.

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[2] Thematic roles may be considered, as suggested by Dowty and Ladusaw (1988) and Jones (1988), as "clusters of verb entailments and presuppositions".

(13) *Lexical skeleton for 'give'*

semantic structure: give (giver, given, givee)

(thematic translation rules)

thematic structure: give (agent, theme, goal/recipient)

(th-arg linking)

argument structure: give (arg_1, arg_2, arg_3)

At semantic structure, roles are not presumed to be listed in any particular order. Thematic roles are ordered at th-structure according to the thematic hierarchy, and in the unmarked case are linked to arguments at a-structure in this order, the highest role linked to the first argument position, etc.

Predicate morphology is of two types: morphology which changes the way arguments are linked to thematic roles, and morphology which affects the assignment of grammatical relations to arguments. Since I am assuming that thematic linking occurs before grammatical linking, thematic morphology should be "inside" any grammatical relation-changing morphology.

After all predicate morphology has applied, arguments are linked to thematic roles and then associated with either grammatical relations or discourse functions (or both), according to language-specific rules. Arguments themselves may be marked morphologically or may take particular syntactic positions relative to the predicate to show their thematic roles, grammatical relations or discourse functions. Most commonly, for example, arg_1 is associated with a grammatical relation of 'subject' and as such, may take a particular case marking (e.g., nominative) or may take a syntactically prominent position (e.g., preverbal position in English) or both, and will often incur agreement on the predicate. Once again, any morphology referring to the thematic role of an argument should appear inside any morphology referring to its grammatical relation or discourse function.

6. The "Open Season" Phenomenon.

Before I return to Korean, one more brief diversion is necessary, to describe a cross-linguistically recurrent trend in grammatical relation assignment, which I have tentatively dubbed the Open Season Phenomenon (OSP), summarized in (14), with frequently occurring constraints given in brackets.

(14) *The Open Season Phenomenon (summary)*

In the absence of a grammatically available "natural" subject [almost always agent], some or all remaining arguments [sufficiently high in the thematic hierarchy] may be linked as subjects or "co-subjects". Similarly, in the presence of a appropriately linked natural subject, if a Theme/Patient is present but is not in second position [normally, because arg_2 has been exceptionally linked to some other thematic role via some morphological rule], then arg_2 *and* the Theme/Patient [and any

other grammatically unlinked arguments of sufficiently high rank] may be linked as objects or co-objects.

Examples of the OSP can be seen in languages as diverse as Kinyarwanda (15), in which a number of non-agentive arguments may be the subject of a passivized clause (Breen, 1988a) and Choctaw (16), in which two arguments may be marked with NOM case in the absence of an agent argument (Breen, 1988b).

(15) *Kinyarwanda (Bantu)* [=Dryer, 1983 (24)]

(a) Íntebe y -iicar-i -w -é -ho
chair it-sit -BEN-PASS-ASP-on

umugabo n -uúmwáana.
man by-child

'The chair is sat on for the man by the child.'

(b) Umugabo y -iicar-i -w -é -ho
man he-sit -BEN-PASS-ASP-on

íntebe n -uúmwáana.
chair by-child

'The man is sat-on-the-chair-for by the child.'

(16) *Choctaw* [=Davies, 1986 (Ch. 1, (12))]

(a) Hattak-at holisso
man -NOM book

im -ihaksi-tok.
3DAT-forget-PST

(b) Hattak-at holisso-t
man -NOM book -NOM

im -ihaksi-tok.
3DAT-forget-PST

'The man forgot the book.'

7. Lexical structure and case marking in Korean

Gerdts and Youn's distinction between I-Case and S-Case can now be stated in terms of the above apparatus, I-Case representing a link between an argument and its thematic role, and S-case representing the assignment of a grammatical relation to an argument. The specifics of grammatical linking and

case marking for Korean are given in (17) and (18).

(17) *Grammatical Linking in Korean*

a. If the highest available argument is thematically linked to an Agent/Cause, grammatically link *only* that argument as *subject. (Open Season)* If the highest available argument is not an Agent/Cause, grammatically link (as *co-subjects)* that argument and all other arguments with thematic links of Theme or higher.

b. If arg_1 is Agent/Cause and is linked as subject, then link arg_2 and *(Open Season)* any other arguments with thematic link of Theme/Patient or higher as *objects* or *co-objects.*

(18) *Korean case marking (revised)*

a. Assign DAT case to an argument thematically linked to an Exp, Goal, Rec, Ben, etc.

b. Assign INSTR case to an argument thematically linked to an Instr or Path.

c. Assign NOM case to any argument which is grammatically linked as subject or co-subject.

d. Assign ACC case to any argument which is grammatically linked as object or co-object.

The two rules appearing in the examples which introduce changes in argument linking are Dative Shift, which affects thematic linking, and Passive, which affects grammatical relation assignment:

(19) *Dative Shift (Dialect A only)*
Morphology: none
Linking Change: Link arg_2 to Goal/Rec/Ben.

(20) *Passive (both dialects)*
Morphology: *—eci*
Linking Change: Suppress arg_1 's grammatical linking.

Finally, a statement of the parametric distinction between Dialects A and B which explains the observed differences in their case marking morphologies:

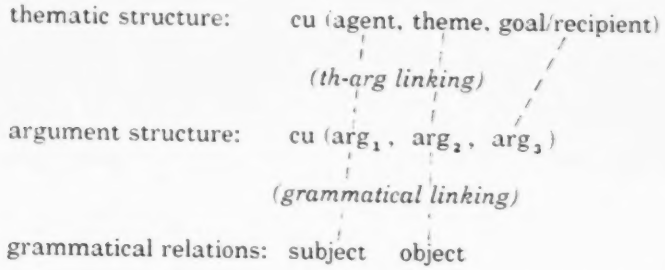
(21) *Case marking strategies, Korean Dialects A and B*

Dialect A: If an argument is assigned case by virtue of both its thematic linking and its grammatical linking, either *or both* cases may be represented morphologically.

Dialect B: If an argument is assigned case by virtue of both its thematic linking and its grammatical linking, either *but not both* cases may be represented morphologically.

Given these rules, and the apparatus outlined above in §5 and §6, sentences like (1) can now be analyzed in detail. Ignoring semantic structure, the lexical skeleton for Korean *'cu-'* is (not surprisingly) identical to that for English 'give':

(22) *Lexical skeleton for 'cu-'*



In the unmarked case, arg_1, arg_2 and arg_3 would be linked to Agent, Theme and Goal/Rec, respectively. Arg_1 would then be grammatically linked as subject, and arg_2 as object, producing (23).

(23) *'cu-' Clause without Dative Shift*

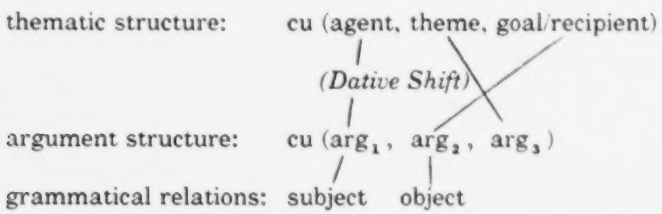
Chelsu-ka Suni-eykey chaek-îl
Chelsu-NOM Suni-DAT book-ACC

cu -et -ta.
give-pst-ind

'Chelsu gave Suni a book.'

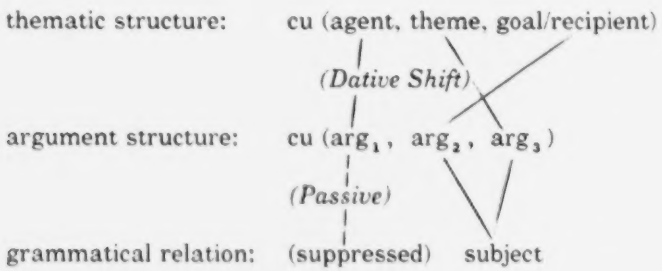
Dialect A has the Dative Shift Rule (19), which links arg_2 to the Goal/Rec. Arg_1, an Agent, is grammatically linked as subject, as usual. By Korean's version of Open Season, since arg_2 is not a Theme/Patient, both it and arg_3, the Theme, are linked as co-objects, producing (24), the lexical structure for (6b) and (8).

(24) *Lexical structure for (6b) and (8), with Dative Shift*



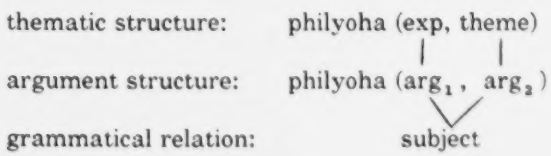
If Passive is applied to the structure in (24), the grammatical linking of arg_1 is suppressed, and arg_2 and arg_3 are then, by Open Season, linked as co-subjects, producing the structure in (25) for sentence (1).

(25) *Lexical structure for (1)*



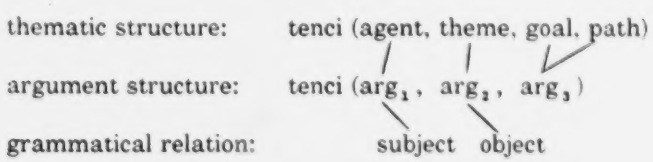
The Open Season rule also explains the various case marking options for Inversion Clauses in both dialects. In (26), arg_1's thematic link to Exp causes it to be assigned DAT case, while the absence of an Agent leads arg_1 and arg_2 to be linked as co-subjects and hence assigned NOM case, producing (7).

(26) *Lexical structure for (7)*



Finally, clauses with stacked I-Cases such as (6c) might tentatively be explained in terms of multiple thematic linking, as suggested in (27).

(27) *Tentative lexical structure for (6c)*



8. Summary

The present analysis explains several troubling aspects of Korean case marking, particularly stacking and spreading, from a lexical approach. While it reflects Gerdts and Youn's intuitions concerning a distinction between I-Case and S-Case, it has several advantages over their RG approach: It explains the morphology of case marking in Korean without reference to several levels of syntactic derivation, including intermediate levels for which there is little morphological evidence. It explains case spreading in terms of a cross-linguistically recurrent trend, the Open Season option, in which grammatical relations may be shared rather than passed on, avoiding the apparent contradiction a feature-passing analysis introduces in sentences like (7a). Finally, differences between the two described dialects are described in terms of a slight difference in strategies for morphological representation of case.

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